

OPINION

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Building a foundation

Our position: Teamwork allowed Central Florida to broaden high-tech base.

In building and broadening Central Florida's economy, teamwork pays off. The latest example is a San Diego high-tech firm's decision to open an office in Orlando.

A few years ago, Central Florida leaders teamed up to persuade a federal commission not to call for closing the military center that anchors the region's computer simulation industry. Then last year, regional leaders cooperated to win approval for a new medical school for the University of Central Florida and bring the Burnham Institute for Medical Research to Orlando.

Recently, Virtual Reality Medical Center announced plans to open its first office outside of California in Orlando. Its president told the *Sentinel* that his company chose Orlando because of its na-

tional reputation as a hub for the computer simulation industry, and because of the city's budding potential in medical research. It's notable that state and local officials did not have to offer financial incentives to land the company.

Keep it going

Virtual Reality Medical Center is a relatively new company, with about 50 employees and \$2 million a year in revenue. It expects to have at least a half-dozen advanced research workers in Orlando by the end of the year. Its work in cutting-edge therapies for Iraq war veterans gives it tremendous potential for growth.

By working together, regional leaders have laid a strong foundation to keep attracting high-wage employers and improving Central Florida's economy.